

1 Introduction

1.1 Emerging Powers and South-South Cooperation

During the last two decades, new actors have emerged on the stage of international politics, signaling a change in the power structure established after the Cold War (Wehnzaio 2011; Debiel et al. 2006: 21; Linlin 2011; Gray and Murphy 2013; Kahler 2013). These countries are categorized as *emerging powers* or *rising powers* (Kahler 2013; Schirm 2006; Schläger 2007; Alexandroff and Cooper 2010) and play an ever more important role in international politics. Due to the new or regained economic importance of these actors that is accompanied by a relative decline of the former world powers, a political shift towards a multi-polar world can be observed (Narlikar 2010; Almeida 2007; Cooper and Flemes 2013). The influence of the new actors on international power constellations has increasingly received attention in both, international politics and academic research (Esteves 2015; Haibin 2012; Scholvin 2010; Buxton and Bullard 2014; Gratius 2008).

As an illustration of the occurring changes, the Organization for Economic Development and Co-operation (OECD) noted that in:

"[...] 2009, China became the leading trade partner of Brazil, India and South Africa. The Indian multinational Tata is now the second most active investor in sub-Saharan Africa. [...] As of 2008, developing countries were holding USD 4.2 trillion in foreign currency reserves, more than one and a half times the amount held by rich countries. These are just a few examples of a 20-year structural transformation of the global economy in which the world's economic center of gravity has moved towards the east and south, from OECD members to emerging economies, [...]" (OECD 2010b: 2).

Although these changes in the international system cannot solely be attributed to the *emerging powers*, they have been ascribed a key role within these dynamics (Boeckh 2006: 278–279). The discussion includes those, who see the shifts in power as an opportunity from which everybody can benefit, as well as those who think that it will be followed by an inevitable decline of the world powers and a greater instability (Rachman 2011), while others have doubted whether

the changes brought about by the *emerging powers* will last (van Agtmael 2012).

The country that has received the most attention is China (Bräutigam 2009, 2011b; Campbell 2008; Loy and Haan 2006; Nayyar 2008). Other important examples include Brazil, India and South Africa. Together with Russia, those four countries were originally categorized as the BRIC group (with South Africa joining in 2013) since the group of countries under this abbreviation were identified by a Goldman Sachs researcher in 2001 as the most important international players to arise (Hounshell 2011; Silva 2013; O'Neill and Zhizhong 2011). Realizing the potential of joint efforts, the BRICS have taken continuous steps to institutionalize their relations as *emerging powers* (Ying 2011) through regular high-level summits and the foundation of the New Development Bank, which was initiated in 2013 (Stuenkel 2013; Kornegay 2013; Watson et al. 2013). The BRICS also belong to the G20 group, which has been formed as an extension of the former G7/8 as a form of acknowledgement that global challenges cannot be confronted without the new powers. The coherence of the BRICS group has been disputed and it has been argued that due to their territorial size, their historic importance and their economic relevance in global affairs, Russia and China should be seen as special cases, which do not easily fit into the same categories as their counterparts (Flemes and Nolte 2008). Another important question is to what extent the emerging powers have questioned the post-Cold War order or have sought to assume a more advantageous position for themselves (Wahl 2014). Independent on how one tends to answer these questions, the BRICS have dominated the discussion on global power shifts during the last two decades. However, they are not the only *emerging powers* that have shaped the international setting (Mora 2014; Allen 2011). Mexico, Indonesia, Turkey and Nigeria have also become relevant players and their further potential is being discussed (Rachman 2015; Boesler 2013).

An important aspect of these changes at the international level is the cooperation of the *emerging powers* amongst each other and with other developing countries – a group of countries often called the '*Global South*' (Braveboy-Wagner 2003a). This form of cooperation is labeled *South-South cooperation* (SSC) (Costa Leite 2010a; Lengyel and Malacalza 2011).

As one prominent example of Southern cooperation, Brazil, India and South Africa established a forum for trilateral cooperation (IBSA-Forum) in 2003 (Gratius and Sousa 2007; Flemes 2009) and started to cooperate continuously – despite diverging interests in specific sectors (Flemes and Costa Vaz 2011). Moreover, other cooperation arrangements of emerging powers with developing countries – for example within international institutions such as the G-20 in the WTO or the G77 – exist. With stronger coordination efforts in the international area, intra-Southern trade has increased. In 2009, China became Africa’s largest trade partner, which is a symbolic turning point in extra-regional economic relations (Kilama 2015).

The new dynamics in South-South cooperation have received a lot of attention on a political as well as a scientific level and have led some authors to speak of a ‘*new power from the South*’ (Bilal 2012; Chahoud 2007; Dieter 2003). As South-South cooperation has gained increasing momentum during the last two decades (Kevin Gray and Barry K. Gills 2016), it is to be noted that the countries that form the ‘*Global South*’ have attempted to organize their cooperation in order to strengthen and unify their position vis-à-vis the industrialized countries since the 1950s (Nohlen and Axtmann 2000: 699; Lengyel and Malacalza 2011: 6). The importance of the renewed dynamics of South-South cooperation is pointed out by Purin (2010: 7):

“[o]ver the last two decades, a fundamental transformation has taken place in the global economy caused by the impressive economic growth of Developing countries like China, India, Brazil, and South Africa. The economic center of gravity is inexorably moving toward the developing South. The remarkable upsurge in cooperation between developing countries, characterized as South-South cooperation, must be understood as part of this larger story. [...] Developing countries today hold more than US\$5 trillion in foreign exchange reserves, which is nearly double the amount held by affluent countries. In 2007, no fewer than 85 developing countries recorded per capita income growth faster than the OECD average of 2.75 percent.”

Against the historic background of previous and often unsuccessful attempts of developing countries to coordinate their strategies in the international context, scholars have predicted that due to the importance of the countries involved and